

**GROTON PLANNING BOARD
SEPTEMBER 19, 2002
MINUTES**

Chairman Degen called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM in the Town Hall

Members present: Degen, Barringer, Clements, Eliot, Lewis, Perkins and Wilson

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING REPORTS

The Board decided that the following members would present the Planning Board reports at the September 23, 2002 Special Town Meeting:

Article 1 (Hannaford's Concept Plan):	Chairman Degen
Article 14 (Gibbet/Angus Restrictions):	Member Clements
Article 21 (Allen's Trail as public way):	Chairman Degen
Article 24 (Brooks Orchard Concept Plan):	Member Barringer

PLANNING BOARD LIAISONS:

The Board voted to appoint the following members to act as liaisons to other Town Departments:

Board of Appeals	George Barringer
Board of Assessors	Bruce Clements
Board of Health	Joshua Degen
Board of Selectmen	Carolyn Perkins
Building Inspector	George Barringer
Conservation Commission	Bruce Clements
Fire Chief	Robert Lewis
Groton Dunstable School District	Scott Wilson
Highway Surveyor	Robert Lewis
Historic Districts Commission	Scott Wilson
Housing Authority	Carolyn Perkins
Housing Partnership	Carolyn Perkins
Park Department	Anna Eliot
Police Chief	Anna Eliot
Sewer Department	Joshua Degen
Water Department	Joshua Degen
West Groton Water Supply District	George Barringer

SITE PLAN REVIEW – SHAW'S SUPERMARKET, BOSTON ROAD

The Board continued its review of the site plan submitted by Shaw's Supermarket for a retail development at the intersection of Boston Road and Sandy Pond Road. Landowner Robert Lacombe, Rick Olson of Shaw's Supermarkets, Attorney Margaret Bowles, design engineer George Dimakarakos of Stamski & McNary, landscape architect Robert Pine of Pine and Swallow Associates, traffic engineer Robert Woodland of McMahon Associates, and many abutters were present. In addition, the Board's consulting engineers Gary Hebert and Frank Holmes of Fay, Spoffard and Thorndike (FST) attended the meeting.

Chairman Degen read the letter dated September 19, 2002 from Town Counsel Elizabeth Lane indicating that the site plan is not consistent with the concept plan if the drainage system is located on the adjacent lot zoned R-A.

Chairman Degen read comments from the Conservation Commission. He said the Board did a site walk with representatives of Shaw's on September 14, 2002. The Board will send representatives to the meeting with Shaw's and Mass Highway on September 26, 2002.

Attorney Margaret Bowles responded to Town Counsel's letter by stating drainage system on the adjoining land can be relocated to the 16-acre, business-zoned site. The site is located within a Secondary Water Resource Protection

District so a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) may be required if there is not enough land to meet the impervious surface requirements.

Chairman Degen said the concept plan was approved for 130,000 sq ft retail space on 16 acres. If additional land is needed, the applicant can submit a petition for Town Meeting to rezone the adjoining parcel or reduce the amount of impervious surface.

Mr. Pine said the land is in the Secondary Water Resource District as defined in the Zoning By-law. The applicant can apply to the ZBA to demonstrate that the intent of the by-law has been met. The site is a large depression so all runoff recharges on site. In addition, a large amount of open space will be protected as a result of the residential development concept plan. The proposed project is within the scope of the concept plan approved by Town Meeting.

Chairman Degen asked if the drainage system could be redesigned. Mr. Pine said, "yes," the drainage basins could be relocated.

Member Wilson asked if the basins were relocated, would it diminish the quality of engineering at this site. Mr. Pine said, "no," it is a simple change.

Member Clements asked if the entire drainage system could be on B-1 zoned land if the ZBA grants a special permit. Mr. Pine said, "yes."

Chairman Degen encouraged the applicant to apply for a special permit. If the ZBA denies the permit, then the concept plan will have to go back to Town Meeting and additional land must be rezoned.

Mr. Pine then presented the plan to construct 110,000 sq ft of retail space. Route 119 will be widened for construction of a turning lane. A village design will be utilized so the site will not look like a shopping center. One of the buildings will face the intersection of Route 119 and Sandy Pond Road. Three landscaped islands will be used to break up the parking lot. Evergreens will be planted along the side of the building for screening. The large building along Sandy Pond Road will be divided into two separate buildings.

Member Barringer asked if the revised plan would accommodate the realignment of Route 119. Mr. Pine said, "yes." Member Barringer asked about the width of the vegetated buffer along Route 119. Mr. Pine said the area slopes down rapidly, so the tree canopy will provide screening. The balloon test at the site walk showed how far from Route 119 the building will be located. The primary widening of Route 119 is to the east of this vegetated buffer.

Member Lewis asked how the HVAC equipment would be screened. Mr. Pine said more trees would be planted to provide better screening.

Member Barringer asked if a bike path could be constructed along Route 119. Mr. Pine said that would require more pavement and less vegetated buffer along Route 119.

Member Clements asked if a sidewalk would be constructed along Route 119. Mr. Pine said, "no."

Member Eliot said she appreciates the additional plantings shown on the plan. She asked if a pathway could be constructed to connect the residential subdivision with the shopping area.

Member Wilson asked what the rationale is for the layout of the parking lot. Mr. Pine said there are more parking spaces than will be needed other than at peak times. Circulation between parking areas is an important consideration. Member Wilson reiterated the request for pedestrian access between the shopping area and housing in the adjacent subdivision.

Member Perkins asked if the buildings could be stained rather than painted plain white so the area will have a more rural ambience.

Member Lewis said he liked the plan including the 9.5 ft wide parking spaces. He said lighting should not cause glare on Route 119. The HVAC equipment should be screened by raising the top of the façade of the building if necessary to keep noise and visibility down. He asked that the applicant consider painting a mural on the side of the building similar to a store in Milford, NH.

Chairman Degen agreed with the request for a mural. He said there is a Star Market in Cambridge with such a mural. He asked about delivery trucks, loading areas, snow plowing, and snow storage.

Barbara Seeber-Wagner of Laurel Lane asked how people would be able to walk from Shelters Road and across Route 119. Mr. Pine said they do not want to promote crossing Route 119 in this location other than at the cross walk near the entrance to the site.

Chairman Degen said the Board of Selectmen and Mass Highway have been working together on an intersection improvement plan. He said the traffic could be queued by coordinating the traffic lights.

Cheryl Drubin read comments from Leslie Lathrop about the Groton Jade site. Chairman Degen said this site is not under consideration at this meeting.

Richard Fichera of Laurel Lane asked about the 50,000 cubic yards of fill that will be brought onto the site. He asked who would check the site to be sure the fill is clean. Mr. Pine said all the fill must be clean sand and gravel. Chairman Degen said testing of the fill to be sure it is clean can be included in the conditions of approval.

Traffic engineer Robert Woodland presented an overview of the traffic study and proposed changes to Route 119. He said the work must be done in conjunction with the improvements to be implemented by Mass Highway. The study area for this project extends to the Ayer town line. Most of the increased traffic will be generated on weekday evenings and on weekends. The traffic counts were taken in June 2002, and an in-depth review will be done of the AM peak traffic. Mr. Woodland described the methodology of the traffic study including collecting existing data, project traffic volumes for five years by adding a 2% growth rate per year for five years. The intersection of Boston Road and Sandy Pond Road is failing today. The State's 25% design plan for a traffic signal will increase capacity on Route 119 and the side streets. Shaw's will coordinate work with Mass Highway to improve the intersection of Route 119 and Sandy Pond Road and the intersection of Route 119 and Whiley Road. When the improvements are complete, the Level of Service will be "A". If the State funding does not come through, Shaw's will implement an interim road improvement plan without the State-funded improvements. At the meeting with Mass Highway on September 26, Shaw's will try to expedite the process so the road improvements can move forward together.

Member Lewis asked if Mass Highway approved the second light at the entrance to Shaw's on Route 119. Mr. Woodland said Mass Highway is looking closely at the second signal. The proposed road improvements will be discussed at the meeting with Mass Highway on Thursday, September 26, 2002.

The Board's traffic engineer, Gary Hebert of FST, said it is very important to analyze the morning peak hour traffic. He said he is very concerned about the entrance to the site from Route 119 during the interim period if Mass Highway does not install the traffic light at the intersection of Boston Road and Sandy Pond Road. He said he agrees that pedestrian access to the site is desirable. He said the Board must review the plan carefully because it will generate an additional 9000 trips per day.

Member Perkins asked when Shaw's anticipates opening the facility. Mr. Olson said about one year after the approvals are granted. Member Perkins asked when the State will install the traffic light. Mr. Woodland said it is on the TIP list for 2007, but Shaw's is working with Mass Highway so it will be done sooner. Member Perkins said this means the interim plan will be in place for three years. She suggested that Shaw's fund the State's planned improvements to the intersection because it is essential for public safety at this site. She said the final plan, with two traffic lights, is much better than the interim design.

Member Wilson asked how the interim situation will work. Mr. Woodland said the intersection must be upgraded and the alignment changed as shown on the proposed plan. Member Wilson expressed concern that the Town may have to

live with the interim plan for quite a while.

Member Eliot asked about the timing of the lights. Mr. Woodland said timing and control of the lights is up to Mass Highway, but they can be coordinated to maximize traffic flow.

Member Clements expressed concern that left turns will be difficult during the interim period. Mr. Woodland agreed, and added it will be especially difficult from Whiley Road. He said they will respond to the comments in the FST report.

Member Eliot asked why Shaw's cannot accommodate the widening of the intersection of Route 119 and Sandy Pond Road. Mr. Woodland said there are limitations in the right-of-way that are not under Shaw's control including the area on the other side of Sandy Pond Road where the restaurant must be relocated.

Member Barringer asked if the traffic study included the area to the north or east of the intersection such as Forge Village Road. Mr. Woodland said, "no," but they can look at this area in the future. Member Barringer said the study should include Forge Village Road and the area to the east of the site.

Chairman Degen agreed that Shaw's must look at a broader area in its traffic study. He said other tenants could open at 6:00 AM so the morning peak traffic is an important factor. He asked if Shaw's would be willing to donate funds for the State's traffic light rather than using the interim plan. Mr. Woodland said Shaw's is spending \$500,000.00 for the interim improvement measures. Chairman Degen said FST should consider other types of retail use when it reviews the traffic study. He said Shaw's should include Forge Village Road to the intersection with Gibson Road and Boston Road to the intersection with Sunset Road in its traffic study.

David Martin of Shelters Road said June data does not represent normal traffic congestion with school buses starting and stopping. The Board asked Mr. Hebert for his opinion. Mr. Hebert said it is important to consider the morning peak traffic in the study. The Board requested that Shaw's provide this information,

Mr. Martin expressed concern about school buses and children crossing the road. Chairman Degen asked if the traffic lights could be equipped with buttons for pedestrian crossings.

Sarah Campbell of Laurel Lane asked if the school bus could go down Shelters Road and Laurel Lane. Waiting for the bus on Route 119 will be very dangerous because this location has poor visibility and Three buses stop there in the morning and three stop in the afternoon. The Board said she should submit this request to the school department.

Richard Fichera said he appreciated the FST review. He asked that more attention be given to the intersection of Route 119 and Shelters Road. He noted that the underlying assumptions are very important factors in the study.

Julie Radwan of Shelters Road said there are not many options for the school bus stop in this area. She expressed concern about merging traffic in this location. She asked if Shaw's consider having only one access on Sandy Pond Road and none on Boston Road. She said if a restaurant goes in, it will create even more traffic.

Colin Campbell of Laurel Lane asked about the mitigation ratios. Mr. Woodland said it is 0.83. Mr. Campbell asked if this ratio is for all retail use. Mr. Woodland said, "yes," it is based upon 110,000 sq ft retail space. Mr. Campbell asked if there will be no left turns allowed during the interim period. Mr. Woodland said, "yes," left turns cannot be done safely without a signal. Traffic will be re-routed through the signal at the intersection. However, they are hoping to move forward and coordinate the signalization with Mass Highway so they will not have to build the interim plan.

Member Eliot asked if the other buildings would be built for Shaw's tenants. Mr. Woodland said Shaw's will build and lease all the other retail buildings. Rick Olson said Shaw's will own the buildings and lease to tenants. Attorney Bowles said the Town's regulations control what types of uses are permitted at the site.

Chairman Degen asked how much time is needed to study the AM peak traffic and to expand the study area to the intersections of Boston Road and Gay Road, the intersection of Boston Road and Nate Nutting Road, the intersection

of Boston Road and Sunset Road, the intersection of Forge Village Road and Gilson Road, and Sandy Pond Road to the Ayer town line.

Member Eliot said she strongly supports the installation of both traffic lights (Shaw's and the State's) at the same time to address all the public safety concerns. All other members of the Board agreed.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the review of the site plan on October 24, 2002 at 7:30 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Collette
Planning Administrator

